The National Capital Commission

National Capital Commission
Commission de la capitale nationale

The National Capital Commission is a Crown corporation of the Government of Canada

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NCC / CCN P 79 96

Message from the Chairman

The Greenbelt is truly a special place, with its rural and natural character, its diversity of farms, forests, wetlands, and research establishments, its richness of visitor experiences — all offered in a pastoral setting in the midst of Canada's fourth largest urban area. The Greenbelt is unique; there is nothing like it anywhere else in North America.

This Master Plan is the first comprehensive review of the Greenbelt since it was first proposed by Jacques Gréber in his 1950 *Plan for the National Capital*. The Master Plan charts a new 20-year course for the Greenbelt. The plan sets out the roles of the Greenbelt in the Capital, the vocations of its lands, and the kinds of land uses, character and visitor experiences it will offer.

Tomorrow's Greenbelt will continue to support the green image of the Capital and the region's quality of life. It will continue to provide a home for research and other institutions, where appropriate. For Canadians who visit their Capital, the Greenbelt will be a powerful symbol of Canada's rural landscapes and their contribution — past, present and future — to the vitality of Canada.

The Master Plan has been prepared by the National Capital Commission on behalf of the government of Canada. The NCC regards the Greenbelt as both a national asset and an important part of people's lives in the National Capital Region. The Plan's policies and directions reflect many different perspectives from diverse audiences: residents of the area, university students from across Canada and people from various levels of government.

The Greenbelt Master Plan helps build pride and unity in our nation through the Capital. It demonstrates the federal government's commitment to a vibrant and healthy future for the Greenbelt. I invite you to explore this master plan, to share in its vision and to help us turn that vision into reality for the Greenbelt — one of the Capital's most treasured landscapes.

Marcel Beaudry

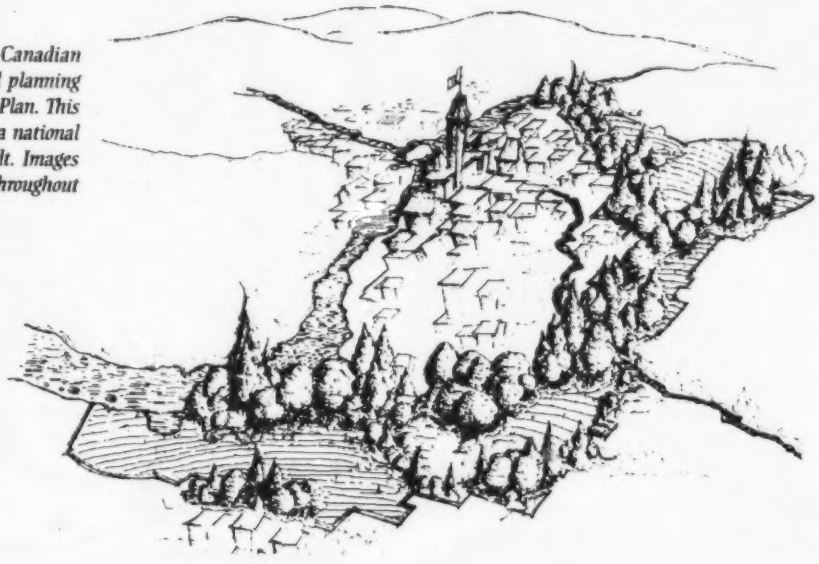
Marcel Beaudry
Chairman

1. Introduction

What is the Greenbelt?

As the Capital's principal rural landscape, the Greenbelt offers a welcome breathing space between the Capital's inner and outer urban areas on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River. The Greenbelt is a crescent-shaped mosaic of farms, forests and wetlands complemented by ski and hiking trails and dotted with federal and private institutions. Its rural character, along with the wilderness setting of Gatineau Park and the Capital's many riverside parks and urban green spaces, creates a uniquely Canadian setting for the Capital that symbolizes the vast and diverse landscapes of this great nation. It is the only greenbelt in the world that is publicly owned in its entirety, and it helps make Canada's Capital one of the most beautiful and enjoyable capitals in the world.

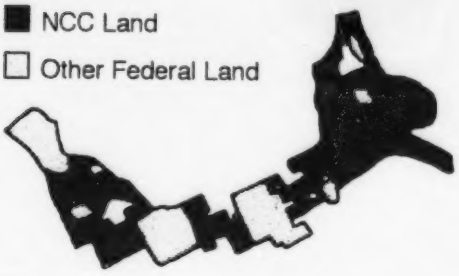
In 1991-92, 150 students at nine Canadian university schools of urban and regional planning generated ideas for the Greenbelt Master Plan. This unique program provided the NCC with a national perspective on the future of the Greenbelt. Images from the students' submissions are found throughout the Master Plan Summary.

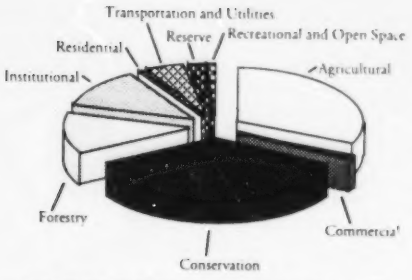


The Capital and its Greenbelt — University of British Columbia

The Greenbelt encircles the City of Ottawa and parts of the cities of Nepean and Gloucester. Its 20,000 hectares virtually equals the area it surrounds. In 1996, almost half a million people lived within the inner urban area surrounded by the Greenbelt. Ranging in width from two to ten kilometres, the Greenbelt lies within eight kilometres of Parliament Hill and the heart of the Capital.

Greenbelt Ownership





LAND USES IN THE GREENBELT (1996)

The NCC owns approximately three quarters of the land in the Greenbelt, most of it natural areas, farms and forests. NCC Greenbelt lands also have recreational, residential, commercial and institutional uses. Greenbelt land that is owned and managed by federal agencies other than the NCC supports such uses as the Macdonald-Cartier International Airport, Agriculture Canada research farming, two Natural Resources Canada research complexes and various Department of National Defense installations. Most roads crossing the Greenbelt (about four percent of the overall Greenbelt area) are owned by either local, regional or provincial governments.

The Greenbelt's Steward: The National Capital Commission

The Greenbelt is the responsibility of the National Capital Commission (NCC), the federal Crown corporation that plans, designs and manages federal property and regulates development on all federal lands in the National Capital Region. Since 1986, these traditional NCC functions have been augmented with responsibility for coordinating the celebration, through programs, events and activities in the Capital, of the natural and cultural heritage that makes Canada and Canadians unique. The NCC mission has the following three basic elements:

- to safeguard and preserve the Capital's national treasures;
- to communicate Canada to Canadians through the Capital; and
- to make the Capital a meeting place for Canadians, a place where they can learn about each other.

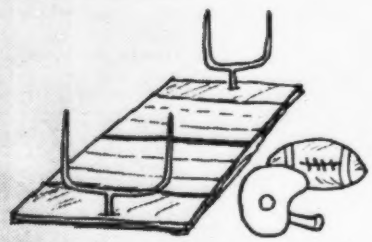
AN EVOLVING GREENBELT

- *Much of the area that is now the Greenbelt used to be farmland, and was home to several large government institutions (for example, the Connaught Rifle Range and the Macdonald-Cartier International Airport).*
- *Most of the land was purchased between 1958 and 1966, at a cost of $40 million (1966). Forty percent of the land was acquired through expropriation.*
- *In 1974, 1,100 hectares of land were added to the Greenbelt to define the edges of a proposed community near Carlsbad Springs. It was never built, but much of the land remains as a Greenbelt extension.*
- *In 1990, 31 hectares of ecologically vulnerable land in Stony Swamp were added to the Greenbelt.*
- *Other lands have been transferred to provincial and municipal governments for new roads.*
- *From 1966 to 1996, the Greenbelt grew by 650 hectares.*

2. About the Greenbelt

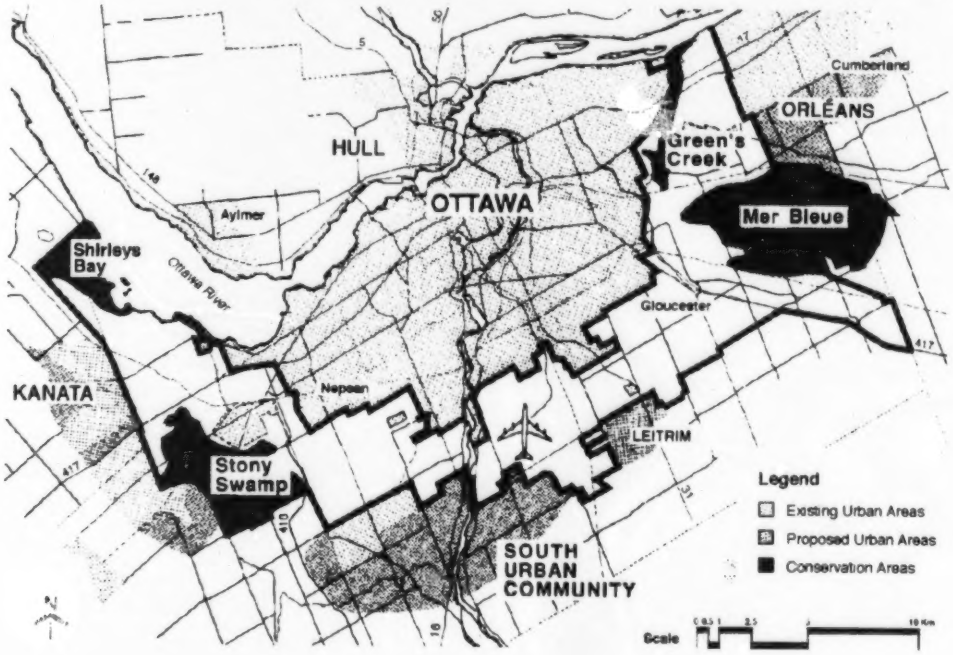
The Greenbelt Story: Diversity and Change

The Greenbelt was conceived in 1950 by Parisian architect-planner Jacques Gréber. Its purpose: to shape the expanding urban Capital and provide a reserve of land for future public and private institutions. By 1966, when land purchases were complete, several organizations were already located in the Greenbelt, including Bell Northern Research (1960) and Agriculture Canada (1966). In 1961, the NCC entered into a 50-year forest management agreement with the Government of Ontario, and much of the Greenbelt's abandoned and marginal farmland has since been reforested. Remaining farms have become larger as a result, and the number of houses in the Greenbelt has declined. Also, boundaries have changed, as in the 1970s and 1980s when steps were taken to protect such environmentally important natural areas as Mer Bleue and Stony Swamp. Walking and ski trails were created, and the Greenbelt began to be widely recognized as an accessible rural and natural oasis for outdoor recreation.



If the Greenbelt were completely covered by Canadian football fields, it would contain almost 25,000 of them!

The Greenbelt was originally intended to encircle and contain the urban capital. But the Capital grew so fast that by 1970 it had reached the population that Gréber had predicted for the year 2000.



The Greenbelt today

Jacques Gréber

Based on the British garden city concept, greenbelts were originally intended to prevent the city from sprawling into the countryside. In 1950, the famous French urban planner, Jacques Gréber, recommended the creation of a greenbelt around Canada's Capital. Lands were acquired between 1958 and 1966 at a cost of $40 million. The federally owned Greenbelt now covers nearly 200 square kilometres.

Shirleys Bay (800 ha.)
Provincially significant wetland, migratory bird staging and nesting area, fish habitat and sedge fen. Causeway acts as an excellent birdwatching venue.

Shirleys Bay Shoreline
Opportunity for year-round public activities.

Bell Northern Research and Northern Telecom
Telecommunications research with 8,000 employees in future. Home to the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre (1992).

DND/Connaught Rifle Range
International-level target-shooting rifle competitions for over 80 years.

National Capital Equestrian Centre
Riding school and training centre, site of international riding and jumping events.

Shirleys Bay Research Centre
1,000 employees in communications and aerospace research. Birthplace of Anik satellites and the CanadArm.

Farms in the western Greenbelt benefit from large areas of high-quality agricultural soils and extensive tile drainage.

Silver Springs Farm
Historic Landmark (1867), and working farm.

Ottawa-Nepean Tent and Trailer Park
Almost 300 sites accommodating visitors from across Canada and around the world.

Bruce Pit (300 ha.)
Renaturalized sand pit with diverse wildlife habitat. Outdoor recreation and interpretation potential.

Pinhey Forest (300 ha.)
Managed woodlot begun in the 1930s to prevent sand erosion. Wildlife habitat and recreational open space.

Nepean Sportsplex (1973)
Regional scale sports and recreation facility.

Bishop and **Campbell Sandstone Quarries**
Formerly provided stone for the construction of the Parliament Buildings.

Panoramic view of the Capital Region and the Gatineau Hills.

Canadian Mineral, Energy and Technology Centre & Canadian Explosives Research Lab
Testing of energy and mining exploration technology. Explosives testing, including fireworks.

Bells Corners
Residential enclave of 4 square kilometres, home to 9,600 people and a regional retail destination.

Stony Swamp (2,000 ha.)
Provincially significant wetland on shallow soils. Largest forested area in the Greenbelt. Provincially and regionally significant plants and animals. Popular year-round for nature interpretation and outdoor recreation.

Wild Bird Care Centre (1992).

Jack Pine Trail (1969) A popular winter bird feeding area with trails and boardwalks.

Log Farm
Restoration of the Bradley Farm of 1857.

New Highway 416 is one of the most environmentally sensitive roads built by the Province.

Richmond Road. One of the oldest roads in the region (1819).

Agriculture Canada Research Farms (1,700 ha.)
Centre for Food and Animal Research (CFAR), monitoring research croplands and conducting animal nutrition studies for over 20 years. Animal Disease Research Institute (ADRI), one of two animal health and rabies prevention/detection laboratories in Canada.

Southern Greenbelt farms, on the best soils in the Greenbelt, form a major part of the 5,000 hectares leased to about 70 farm tenants throughout the Greenbelt.

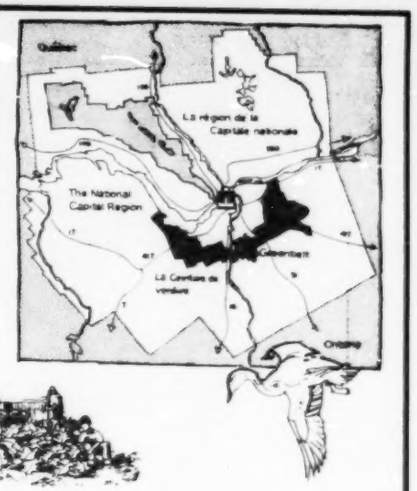
Macdonald-Cartier International Airport (2,145 ha.)
Military and domestic aviation dating from 1920s. Serves over 2 million passengers annually. New phase of growth planned.

Black Rapids Lockstation and Rideau Canal (1830s)
Historically and environmentally significant site at the geographic centre of the Greenbelt. Provides important boating access to the Capital, with programming and public use potential.

Hornets Nest Soccer Fields
11 sport fields host local and provincial tournaments.

Greens Creek
An area of international paleontological interest. The creek valley cuts through erosion-prone clay to reveal post-glacial fossils, as large as seals, from the ancient Champlain Sea.

Along St. Joseph Boulevard are some of the Greenbelt's 280 leased residential properties.



Blackburn Hamlet
Residential enclave of 2.2 square kilometres, home to 9,700 people.

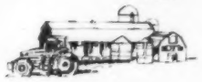
Pine View Golf Course
A 36-hole public course operated by the City of Gloucester.

Francon Quarry
An active private quarry with many years of production remaining.

Forest Ridge Escarpment
A diversity of institutional uses, municipal infrastructure and natural environmental functions co-exist on these rocky slopes.

The Greenbelt's environment has been improved by community organizations that have planted many thousands of trees.

Greenbelt Market Gardens
Many families have a long history of farming here. 20% of the produce merchants in By Ward Market come from the Greenbelt.



The eastern farm sector has some of the most extensive and picturesque areas of rolling rural landscape in the Greenbelt.

Conroy Pit (110 ha.)
Abandoned sand pit, recreational, interpretation and development potential.

Mer Bleue Bog (2,300 ha.)
Largest sphagnum peat bog in the Capital Region, southerly example of the boreal forest of Canada's northlands. Home to provincially rare plants and animals, considered the only self-sustaining ecosystem in the Greenbelt.

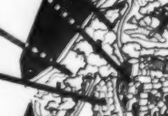
A popular nature study destination with 20 kilometres of trails and boardwalks allowing glimpses of an unusual natural environment. Ottawa Field Naturalists started excursions in the 1880s.

Originally acquired as a bombing range to train pilots in W.W.II, bomb craters can still be seen in the slowly healing peat.

Designated as a wetland of international significance in 1995.

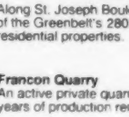
Carlsbad Forest Reserve (1,100 ha.)
Acquired in 1974 as a green buffer for the now defunct Southeast Urban Community. Mineral springs made Carlsbad community a popular turn-of-the-century destination; water largely unfit for human consumption.

The Royal Swans, a centennial gift from Queen Elizabeth II, winter here in the Greenbelt.

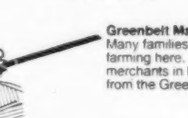


Over 3.6 million trees have been planted in the Greenbelt since 1966.

Ramsayville
Hamlet founded in the mid-1800s. Remaining buildings form important cultural landscape.



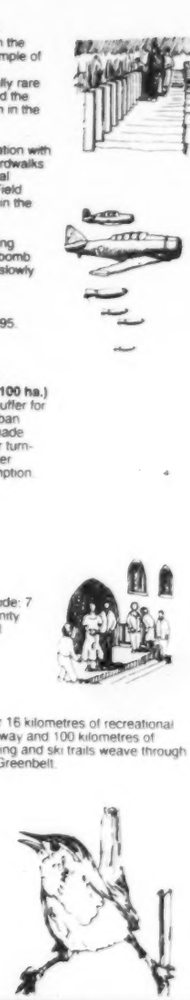
Pine Grove Forest (1,200 ha.)
Largest block of 2,600 hectares of natural and plantation forest managed by Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Multiple-use area: timber production, nature trails, and wildlife habitat.



16 soccer fields, 6 ball diamonds, 3 golf courses, sailing club, and other community recreation facilities are found in the Greenbelt.

Other community facilities include: 7 churches, 6 schools, 2 community centres, hospital and provincial correctional facility.

Over 16 kilometres of recreational pathway and 100 kilometres of walking and ski trails weave through the Greenbelt.



National Capital Commission / Commission de la Capitale nationale

Canada

The National Capital Greenbelt

1996

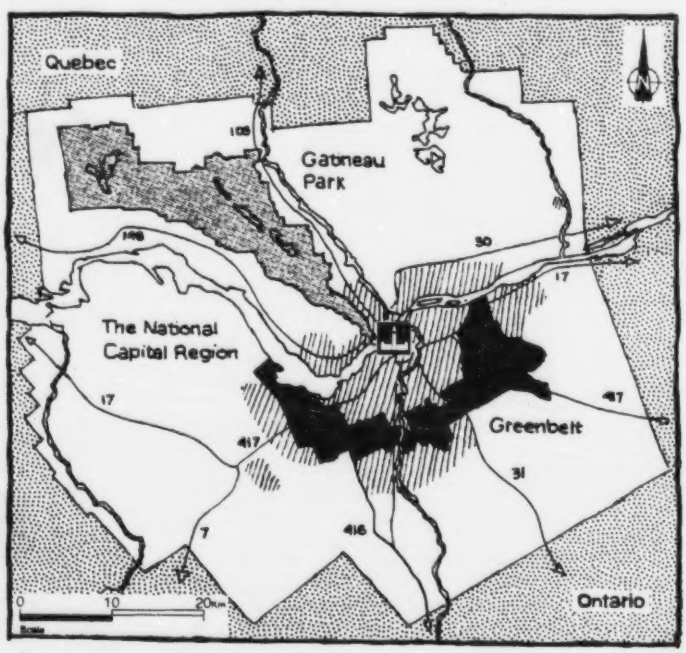
Past & Present: A Diverse Landscape

In recent years, large urban communities have grown up outside the Greenbelt — creating on the Ontario side of the Capital Region an urban pattern unlike that of any other city in North America.

Today, one third of NCC-owned lands in the Greenbelt are leased to tenants for a variety of uses, ranging from farms to municipally run recreational facilities; about 8,000 people work and 1,000 people live in the Greenbelt. Clearly, the story of the Greenbelt has always been — and under the Master Plan will continue to be — a story of diversity and change.

A Greenbelt for the Capital and the Region

The Greenbelt exists for Canadians and for regional residents. It is an expression of the federal government's desire for a Capital of outstanding character and beauty. It is a living symbol of the rural landscapes that make up the majority of Canada's inhabited areas, and a symbol of Canada's commitment to the stewardship of our natural resources. The Greenbelt provides a setting for specialized research institutions that work to enhance Canada's international reputation. It acts as an internationally significant case study of how open spaces can be used to shape urban areas and improve the quality of urban life. Finally, the Greenbelt is a legacy from the past, unique and irreplaceable.



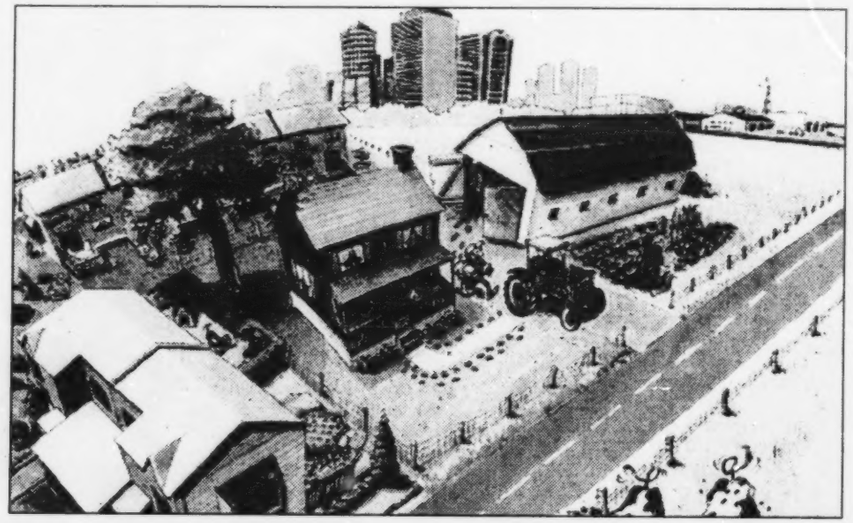
The Greenbelt in the National Capital Region

For communities in the National Capital Region, the Greenbelt provides many benefits, such as trails, equestrian centres, open space areas and natural areas for recreation and education. The Greenbelt is the hub of the regional network of natural areas and conserves much of the rural heritage of the Capital Region.

Its research institutions have enhanced the region's economic and social well-being. As well, the Greenbelt has profoundly shaped urban growth in the Ontario part of the Capital Region. By separating the three large suburban communities of Kanata, Barrhaven/River Ridge and Orléans from the inner urban area, the Greenbelt has influenced the living and work patterns of hundreds of thousands of people, and created an urban form that is unique in North America.

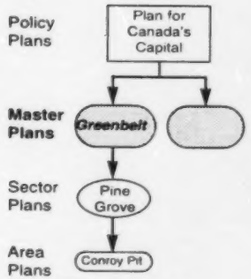
The National Capital Region (NCR) spans the Ottawa River, covering a total area of approximately 4,660 square kilometres; 2,720 square kilometres are found in Ontario, and 1,940 square kilometres in Quebec. NCC-owned lands cover approximately 10 percent of the NCR.

Canada's Capital Region is one of the world's most beautiful and enjoyable capitals, thanks in part to the Greenbelt. Visitors have the opportunity to see a slice of Canada's rural history, geography and nature in the Greenbelt. This national asset is a living demonstration of Canada's concern for the environment, and promotes Canada's green image abroad.



From the NCC public consultation tabloid, 1992

3. Introducing the Master Plan



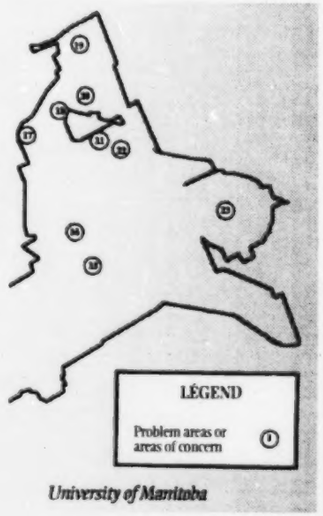
CAPITAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Master Plan is one of several coordinated policy and development documents that guide the NCC in the planning and use of federal lands in the Capital. The *Plan for Canada's Capital*[1] provides general orientation and policies for all federal lands in the Capital, while master plans such as the Gatineau Park Master Plan (completed in 1990) and the Greenbelt Master Plan provide more specific policy direction to guide area planning, development and management decisions.

Why a Master Plan?

The following factors prompted a reexamination of the Greenbelt.

- A broader mandate in 1988 for the National Capital Commission added new responsibility for communicating the essence of Canada through programs, events and activities in the National Capital Region.
- Rapid growth in the outlying communities of Kanata, Barrhaven, Orléans and Leitrim and the associated need for transportation and other services through the Greenbelt made it necessary to plan the Greenbelt's future in harmony with regional and municipal interests.
- The environment of fiscal restraint facing all governments required alternative means of funding programs and operating assets. As well, decisions needed to be made about many Greenbelt facilities so that they could be appropriately managed in the future.
- There was a need for a flexible plan that would anticipate and respond to new opportunities and challenges, such as those related to urban growth, sustainable development and ecosystem planning.



University of Manitoba

[1] The *Plan for Canada's Capital* was approved in 1988; an update of this plan was in progress in 1996.

The Master Plan: A Visionary Guide

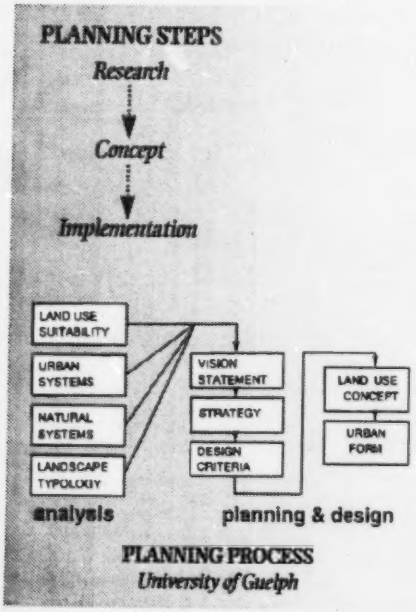
The Greenbelt has evolved with time and changing national and regional priorities and will continue to do so. The Master Plan provides a way to guide the diversity of Greenbelt land uses and landscapes while preserving and building on this Capital treasure.

Given the wide variety of possible influences on the Greenbelt in the future, the Greenbelt Master Plan was developed to be flexible enough to guide decision-making in changing circumstances. As a result, the plan emphasizes the functions and values of different Greenbelt areas rather than prescribing specific land uses. The plan thus serves as a framework for decision-making and not as a rigid blueprint. Some Master Plan proposals are unlikely to be implemented in the short and medium term; their long-term potential is maintained through the plan for future generations.

The Master Plan applies to all federally owned Greenbelt lands, and is intended to form the basis for all decisions relating to the Greenbelt over the 20-year period starting from its adoption in 1996. Other public agencies, such as regional or provincial governments, are encouraged to apply the provisions of this plan to lands they own within the Greenbelt and to reflect them in their land use plans.

Land use is the basis of this plan, as with municipal plans; but the Master Plan also provides guidance for landscape character, public programming and other concerns related to the planning and animation of the nation's Capital. Because the Greenbelt is owned and managed by public agencies, this plan also guides land management, an activity not typically governed by municipal official plans.

Creating the Greenbelt Master Plan



Creating the Master Plan required NCC planners to take a step back from day-to-day issues. First, they assembled background information and examined the policy issues surrounding the Greenbelt, and then identified roles to guide its long-term orientation. Then they developed a concept plan for the Greenbelt describing its desired future character and the organization of land uses within it. Finally, they developed policies and strategies for implementing the Master Plan.

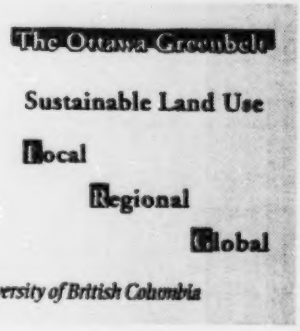
Support for the planning process came from a number of sources — specifically the public, other levels of government and the academic community. During the planning period, the NCC held three public consultations, not only with 12,000 residents and visitors to Canada's Capital Region but also — through the NCC's National Outreach Program — with interested Canadians from across the country. Over 150 students at nine Canadian university schools of urban and regional planning created plans for the Greenbelt in the autumn of 1991.

In addition, the NCC consulted repeatedly with other branches of government. Finally, experts in various subject areas supported the review with specialized research. Of course, a prime concern throughout the process was the proper conduct of environmental assessment, as required by the federal government of Canada.

Fundamental Assumptions

The Greenbelt must have certain attributes if it is to meet the obligations implicit in the Master Plan and ensure the Greenbelt's continued usefulness and health. The following premises provide a basis for the future form, size, use and character of the Greenbelt.

(i) The Greenbelt will remain a large, rural open space running in a continuous belt in roughly the present shape and location.
(ii) The Greenbelt will maintain a diverse mix of uses and landscapes.
(iii) Favourable ecological, community and economic aspects of the Greenbelt will be conserved and enhanced, and areas where significant investments have been made protected.
(iv) The Greenbelt will remain in the public domain.
(v) The Greenbelt will be relevant to the Capital and to Canadians.
(vi) The Greenbelt will continue to play an important research role in the Capital.
(vii) The Greenbelt will continue to generate revenue.
(viii) Partnerships are essential to the Greenbelt's future.



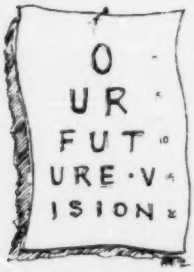
This Master Plan is the first major long-range plan for the Greenbelt since the time of Jacques Gréber. The plan will allow Greenbelt managers and the Capital community to make the long-term commitments that are essential to protecting and renewing this valuable natural resource.

Who Will Use the Master Plan?

The plan will be used by NCC planners and land managers, federal agencies with lands in the Greenbelt, provincial agencies and regional and local municipalities, as well as public, private and non-profit organizations and the general public. The Master Plan represents a commitment to Canadians as to how the NCC will plan and manage the Greenbelt on their behalf.

4. Master Plan Concept

The Capital's Rural Landscape: A Greenbelt Vision



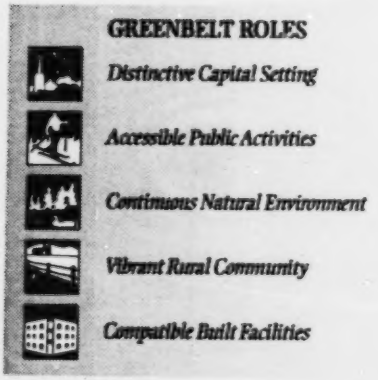
University of British Columbia

The Master Plan guides the Greenbelt to the future described below:

Canada's Capital Region protects and safeguards a range of meaningful landscapes. In the Capital, Canadians can learn about and enjoy much that expresses Canada, from wilderness areas and rivers, to parks and parkways, to urban plazas and beautiful buildings. The Greenbelt is unique among other Capital spaces, a rural landscape of breadth and diversity unequaled in any other North American city. The Greenbelt embodies the rural lifestyle that is a significant part of our Canadian heritage, and allows visitors to the Capital to experience this important aspect of Canadian geography and society.

The Greenbelt shapes and contrasts with the urban spaces that border it, and yet it is an integral part of life in the Capital. The Greenbelt is a rural oasis, away from the bustle of the city, yet easily reached from adjacent communities. Expansive views of the Capital from the Greenbelt are protected. Significant natural areas are linked by a system of protected corridors that strengthen the larger regional ecosystem. Farms and forests thrive in proximity to the urban Capital. The Greenbelt is punctuated with buildings and campus sites, providing open and rural locations for public and commercial activities that serve federal and Capital needs. Roadways and utility corridors fit harmoniously into the Greenbelt's natural and rural landscapes.

In its breadth and diversity, the Greenbelt helps make Canada's Capital one of the most beautiful and enjoyable capitals in the world.



Purpose and Roles

The primary purpose of the Greenbelt is to support diverse rural landscapes and activities — in proximity to the urban area — that contribute to the health and identity of the National Capital Region and that inspire Canadians with pride in their Capital and their country.

In addition to its broad primary purpose, the Greenbelt serves a number of secondary and related roles. It

1. provides a distinctive rural setting for the Capital;
2. serves as a setting for a range of public activities requiring a rural or natural environment;
3. preserves natural ecosystems;
4. sustains productive farms and forests in support of a vibrant rural community; and
5. provides settings for built facilities that contribute to and benefit from the Greenbelt.

These five roles are the backbone of the Greenbelt Master Plan. They are elaborated in the following paragraphs and reflect a future that builds upon many Greenbelt attributes of the past and present.

GREENBELT FORM
Belt maligned for not containing urban growth
Wedges more vulnerable to attrition
Fortress perceived as anti-urban
Necklace neglects need to maintain ecological links
McGill University

Distinctive Capital Setting

The Master Plan fosters the Greenbelt's diverse character and conserves and enhances landscapes that symbolize the natural and rural heritage of Canada and the Capital. Highly visible areas are managed to ensure visual quality, important views are maintained and the rural character of scenic roads enhanced. Major entranceways to the Capital along highways 416 and 417, the Airport Parkway, the Rideau Canal and passenger rail lines create a sense of arrival in the Capital. As travellers pass through open lands, sweeping views of the Capital unfold against the Gatineau Hills. New developments respect the rural character of their Greenbelt surroundings. Adjacent urban areas are clearly distinguished from the Greenbelt, and the absence of nighttime urban lighting in the Greenbelt reinforces this distinction.

Accessible Public Activities

A wide variety of highly accessible attractions and casual open space activities promote the Greenbelt's diverse character and foster an appreciation of the Capital and its surroundings, for example, the National Capital Equestrian Park and the Nepean Tent and Trailer Park. Many visitor attractions and trailheads are located close to urban areas and are well served by public transit. Attractions involve nature interpretation (at Mer Bleue and Stony Swamp, for instance), recreation and education and built facilities such as the Nepean Sportsplex. Visitor services such as bed-and-breakfasts and craft shops are distributed throughout the Greenbelt. The multi-use Greenbelt Spine Trail runs the length of the Greenbelt and connects Greenbelt attractions with the Capital's larger visitor access and attraction network.

Continuous Natural Environment

The Master Plan safeguards the continuity and diversity of the Greenbelt's natural environments. A series of natural areas, including Stony Swamp, Mer Bleue, Green's Creek and Shirleys Bay are the key components of a continuous natural environment in the Greenbelt. These natural areas will be protected by buffer zones, with natural links connecting them to each other and to natural areas beyond the Greenbelt. This allows the free movement of animals and the continuity of plant life, and enhances the

ecological health and resilience of individual areas and the region as a whole. The Greenbelt will be used extensively for ecological research and education, and public interpretation facilities are provided for all four major natural areas.

Vibrant Rural Community

The Greenbelt's vibrant rural community supports the continued use of extensive areas of productive farmland and forests that are protected in large, unfragmented blocks. Long-term land tenure encourages Greenbelt farmers and foresters to invest in the future, practice sound stewardship and participate in renewable resource interpretation and research. Greenbelt tenants offer a range of goods and services, including public learning opportunities, roadside stands with Greenbelt produce, Greenbelt forest and woodlot products and bed-and-breakfasts. Less productive lands and lands of low ecological value are devoted to rural recreation activities such as hobby farming and golf. Rural hamlets such as Ramsayville are reconsolidated through limited residential infill and offer commercial services for visitors — for example, shops and rural accommodation. Small-scale rural commercial, residential and recreational uses are focused away from productive or ecologically sensitive lands into areas that are accessible and scenic, such as the Bank Street and Carling Avenue corridors.

Compatible Built Facilities

Certain institutions and businesses that are important to the Capital need large, open settings. They are placed sensitively so that they maintain the character of the Greenbelt. Many of these facilities provide information and programming that enhance visitor experiences of the Greenbelt. Federal government complexes, such as Natural Resources Canada's CANMET mining and energy technology complex, and private firms, such as Bell Northern Research, can showcase Canadian research, contribute to the Greenbelt's diversity and the region's economic health, and enhance the Capital's reputation as a leading advanced-technology centre. The Macdonald-Cartier International Airport provides an excellent venue for further economic development, as does the junction of highways 416 and 417. Residences in the Greenbelt are in harmony with a healthy natural and rural landscape; buildings in areas that are visually or naturally sensitive (such as the strip development on Richmond Road in Stony Swamp) are phased out over time.

In order to protect rural lands and natural systems from being fragmented, major roads, transitways, and sewer and water mains are bundled into a limited number of shared corridors, such as highways 417 and 416 in the west, Woodroffe, Bowesville, and Conroy corridors in the south and highways 17 and 417 and Innes Road to the east.

The following Places and Experiences map illustrates the types of activities and the character that could be achieved in the Greenbelt.

Place and Experience Scenarios

This panel provides an idea of the types of environments and activities one might experience in the Greenbelt in the year 2020 (or even sooner!). The places and activities you see here are not specific proposals, but the sorts of things that, if we work together, *could* happen.

Parc de la Gatineau
Rivière Gatineau
Rivière des Outaouais
HULL
OTTAWA
AYLMER
Ottawa River
ORLEANS
KANATA
GLOUCESTER
NEPEAN

1. Nature in the City
2. Recreation in the Countryside
3. Interpretation and Learning
4. Grown in the Greenbelt
5. Research for a Better Quality of Life
6. A Publicly Accessible Greenbelt
7. The Greenbelt as Part of Your Community
8. Capital Arrivals
9. Forests at Work
10. Vacationing in the Greenbelt
11. A Place for New Ideas

1. Nature in the City

Important natural features and processes would continue to be protected. In some areas, such as Shirleys Bay where wildlife has priority, visitors would observe nature from a distance. Those visiting Stony Swamp or the expansive Mer Bleue Bog would have more opportunities for close-up plant and animal viewing.

Observing Nature

2. Recreation in the Countryside

Pastoral countrysides and natural shorelines would be a pleasing contrast to the city and would help refresh hundreds of thousands of people who live near the Greenbelt.

An accessible escape from the city

3. Interpretation and Learning

Learning about the many features and activities that make the Greenbelt a special place would be encouraged at various points of interest.

Learning centres and trails

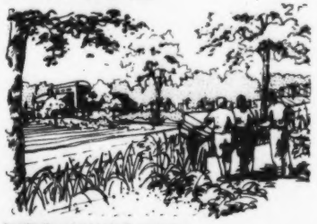
4. Grown in the Greenbelt

Opportunities to visit farms or purchase fresh produce in the Greenbelt would contribute to the visitor's appreciation of rural Canada. The benefits that derive from working the Greenbelt's rural lands would continue to be felt in the Capital's produce markets.

Greenbelt produce stand

5. Research for a Better Quality of Life

Research centres, such as those belonging to Agriculture Canada and Natural Resources Canada would provide visitors and residents with a window into research activities in the Capital. Their settings would contribute to the Greenbelt's landscape character, with tree-lined roads and natural open spaces.



Institutional research centres

6. A Publicly Accessible Greenbelt

An expanded network of trails would make it easier to experience the diversity of places in the Greenbelt. Such a network would also be well connected to neighbouring communities and accessible by transit.

Improved trail connections

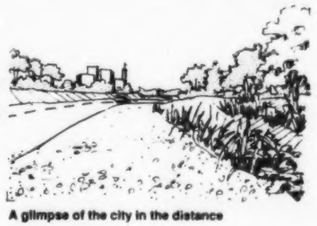
7. The Greenbelt as Part of Your Community

Many Capital residents experience the Greenbelt close to home. Some areas could provide community-sponsored programs and events that would serve as a connection to the more rural and natural experiences in the Greenbelt.

A Greenbelt close to the communmity

8. Capital Arrivals

The main entry routes to the Capital by road, rail and water would offer special views and pass through landscapes that communicate the unique character of the Greenbelt and the Capital.



A glimpse of the city in the distance

9. Forests at Work

Local residents and visitors could help to manage and interpret Greenbelt forests and other natural resources in new ways to help sustain a high quality environment.

Traditional and modern forestry

10. Vacationing in the Greenbelt

Visitors could find accommodation in unique Capital settings with tree-lined rural lanes or forests, all within easy reach of the Capital's many other attractions.

Rural bed-and-breakfasts

11. A Place for New Ideas

Travelling through the Greenbelt, you might come across studies of wildlife and habitats, experiments in sustainable forestry practices, or new methods of farming.

Eco-farm and learning centre

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Canada
1996

The National Capital Greenbelt

Place and Experience Scenarios

Concept Plan

The Concept Plan is the first step in translating the Greenbelt's primary purpose and supporting roles into physical reality. It displays in broad terms the desired land functions and landscape qualities of the Greenbelt, and provides direction for its long-term use and development. It emphasizes which of the five roles will take priority in different parts of the Greenbelt through the physical mapping of the roles onto the Greenbelt landscape.

Under the Concept Plan

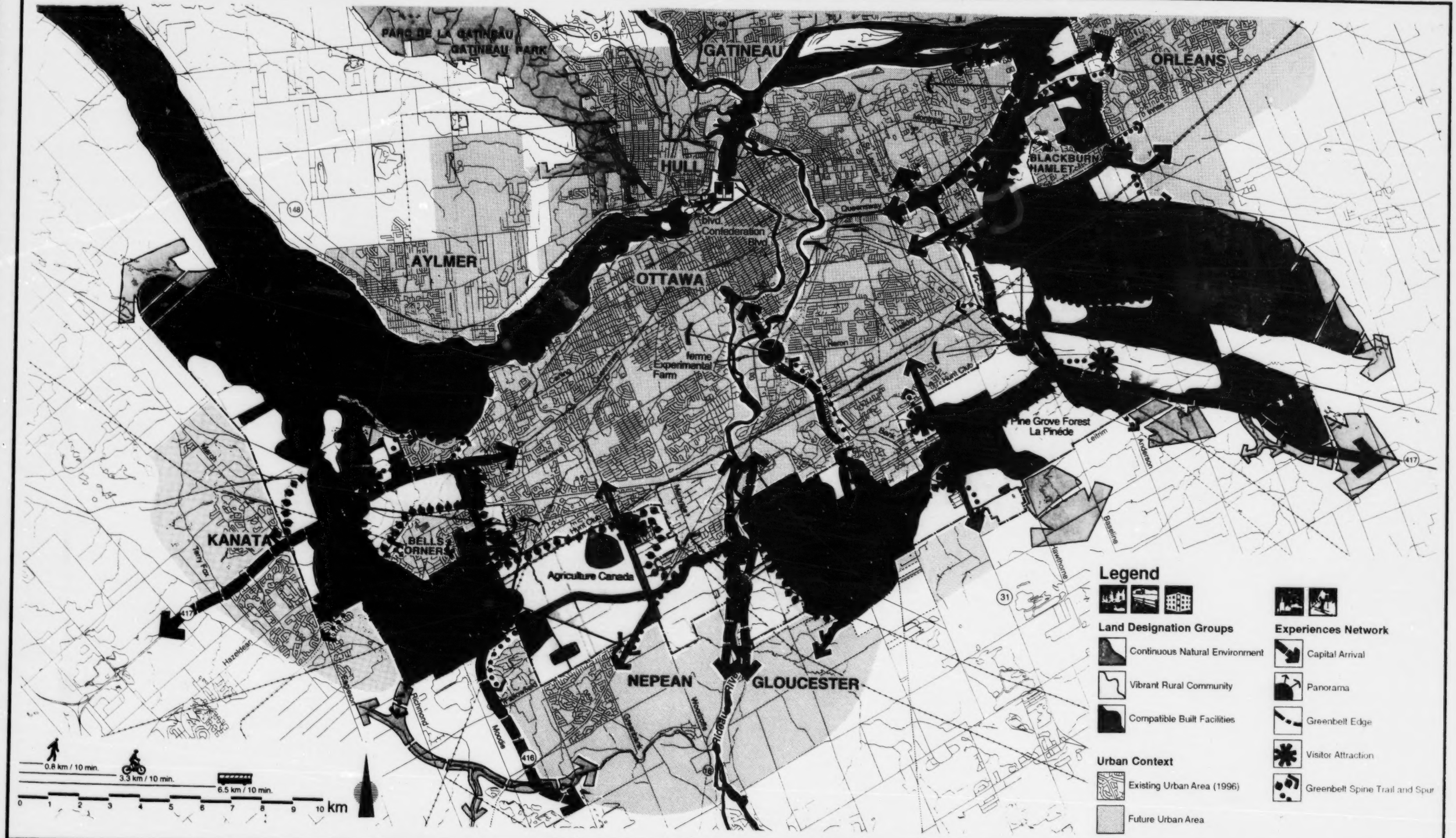
The region-wide system of natural areas is connected and enhanced. Core natural environment lands are protected and linked to each other, both inside and outside of the Greenbelt. Links to natural environment lands outside of the Greenbelt are displayed by green arrows.

Lands in the Vibrant Rural Community are shown in yellow. These areas are maintained for farming and forestry. Selected farms, rural hamlets and other lands offer visitor-oriented rural recreation opportunities.

Selected areas shown in purple are reserved for developments that benefit from and respect the surrounding rural context. Infrastructure traversing the Greenbelt is consolidated into corridors that are also shown in purple. The clustering of linear services through the Greenbelt will help avoid the fragmentation of sensitive natural and rural landscapes.

Major gateways into the Capital are highlighted with red arrows. These Capital Arrivals are planned and managed to maximize the sense of arrival to and orientation in the nation's Capital. High-quality panoramas in other areas (shown by black arrows) provide visitors with a powerful expression of the beauty and grandeur of this rural landscape.

Public activities are identified by red stars at specific locations throughout the Greenbelt. They are rural in nature and rustic in design, complementing their Greenbelt setting. A multi-use recreational Spine Trail (shown in blue) runs the length of the Greenbelt and connects many attractions. Visitors from Canada, the region and abroad enjoy these attractions.



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Concept Plan

5. Land Designations

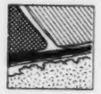
Greenbelt Planning Area

In the early 1970s, over 1,250 hectares of land was added to the southeast part of the Greenbelt. This and other smaller additions have more than offset the transfer of over 500 hectares of Greenbelt land for major roads such as highways 416 and 417.

Since its beginning in 1958, the Greenbelt has changed in response to urban growth, new transportation networks and the need to protect significant ecological lands. As of 1996, these changes have resulted in the addition of approximately 650 hectares to the original Greenbelt.

A further 875 hectares of land are recommended for addition to the Greenbelt in the Master Plan.* These lands are primarily parts of Mer Bleue and Shirleys Bay natural areas. Along with federal ownership, alternate strategies to protect these lands as part of the Greenbelt may be required in specific circumstances. These strategies may involve cooperation with different institutions and landowners.

The Master Plan also recommends the removal of approximately 575 hectares of land from the Greenbelt.* NCC-owned lands constitute about one third of this area. The remaining two thirds of the lands recommended for removal belong to Transport Canada, and are concentrated on the south and east sides of the Macdonald-Cartier International Airport. It is expected that these lands will remain under the ownership of Transport Canada. The future use of all lands to be removed from the Greenbelt is to be considered in the context of federal, regional and local plans.



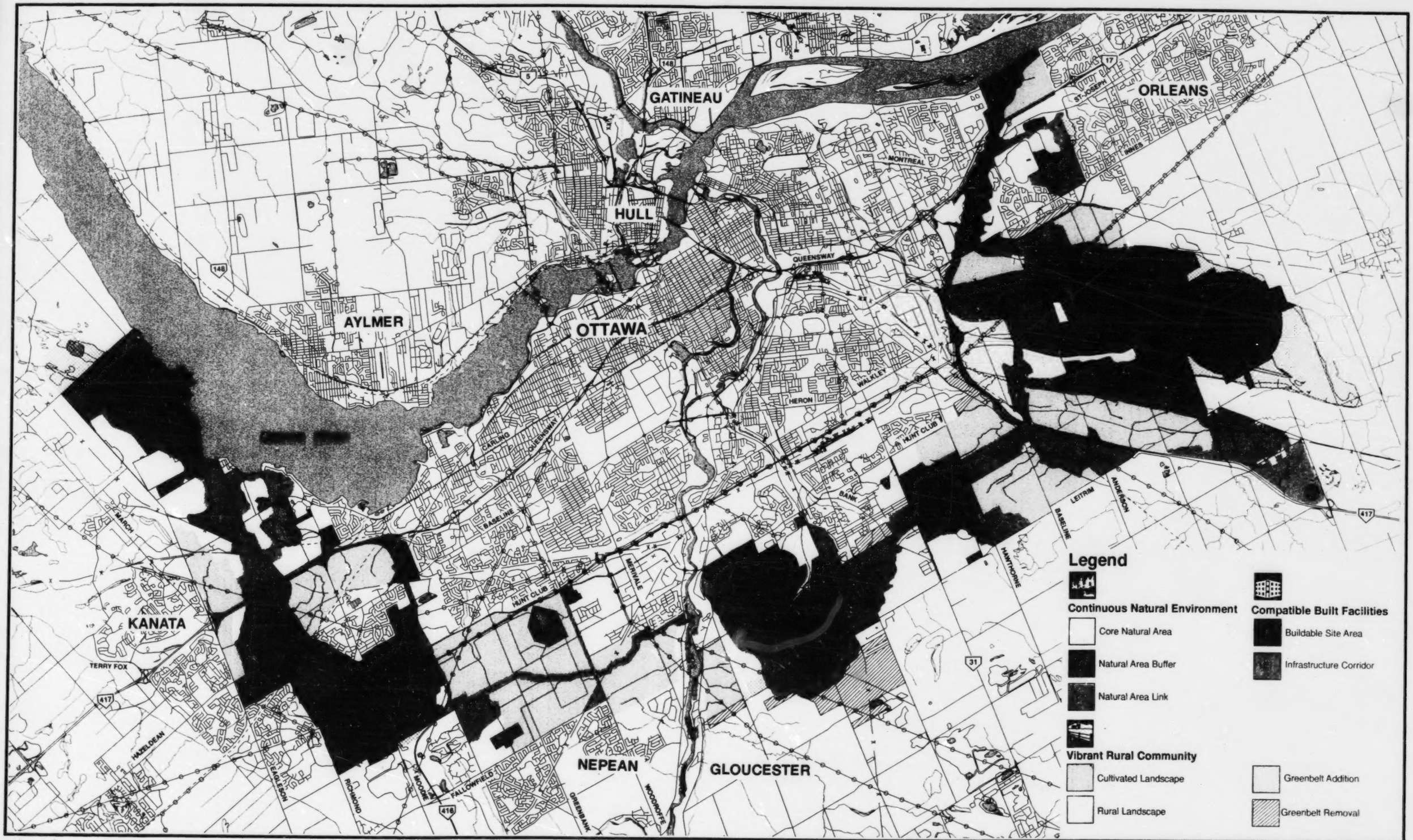
Land Designations

These areas were selected based on an extensive examination of natural and human history, existing land uses and site conditions, public consultation and the land's location and ability to perform certain desired Greenbelt functions over the long-term.

The Concept Plan describes the Greenbelt as a mosaic of natural, rural and built landscapes. These three groups of land are further divided into seven Land Designations* that provide the means to distribute and manage land uses and activities throughout the Greenbelt. The Greenbelt roles and their corresponding land designations are:

GREENBELT ROLE	LAND DESIGNATION
Continuous Natural Environment	• *Core Natural Area* • *Natural Buffer* • *Natural Area Link*
Vibrant Rural Community	• *Cultivated Landscape* • *Rural Landscape*
Compatible Built Facilities	• *Buildable Site Area* • *Infrastructure Corridor*

* *See Land Designations plan, opposite.*



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The National Capital Greenbelt

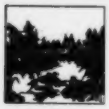
Land Designations

Land designations do not represent a single land use; rather they refer to broad functions that different parts of the Greenbelt perform in support of the Greenbelt concept. Thus, a range of uses may be allowed in a given designation, so long as they all contribute to making the Greenbelt work as intended.

Each land designation has specific objectives and a unique range of supporting land uses and activities. This approach allows the flexibility to address changing circumstances throughout the Greenbelt over the life of the Master Plan.

Experiences Network elements such as Visitor Attractions must also respond to the intent of the Land Designation in which they are situated in terms of character, size and public programming.

The Experiences Network is influenced by the underlying Land Designation.
Land Designations form the foundation for land uses and activities in the Greenbelt.



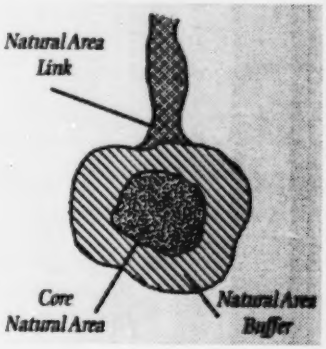
Continuous Natural Environment

Goal

To protect the lands, features and ecological processes necessary to sustain a healthy and diverse natural environment.

Core Natural Area

This designation identifies the most significant and sensitive natural lands in the Greenbelt, such as the large wetland areas of Stony Swamp and Mer Bleue. They provide relatively unfragmented natural habitats. Appropriate uses in these zones include ecological research, nature interpretation and other low-intensity uses respectful of a sensitive natural environment. The areas evolve with minimal intervention unless active rehabilitation is needed to enhance or protect the ecosystem.



Natural Area Buffer

This designation identifies lands that shield Core Natural Areas from the impact of adjacent uses and that add to habitat size. They provide for public activities in a natural setting, away from Core Natural Areas. Appropriate uses in these zones include skiing and walking on trails, visitor or interpretation facilities and low-intensity farming or forestry.

Natural Area Linkage

This designation identifies strategic corridors that link Core Natural Areas and allow for the safe movement of flora, fauna and water, both within the Greenbelt and in the region at large. There is a high percentage of natural or naturalizing vegetation (for example, forests, woodlands and old fields), and the shape of the land often follows ravines, shorelines and escarpments. Appropriate uses resemble those in the Natural Area Buffer designation.

Vibrant Rural Community

Goal

To conserve and use lands wisely for renewable resources and rural recreation and to sustain cultural landscapes that are a meaningful and scenic part of a vibrant rural community.

Rural products from the Cultural Landscape designation.

Rural services from the Rural Landscape designation.

Cultivated Landscape

This designation consists of the best agriculture and forestry lands in the Greenbelt. Appropriate uses include intensive farming and forestry and, where appropriate, a diversity of other activities such as bed-and-breakfasts and pick-your-own farms, where compatible with farming and forestry objectives.

Rural Landscape

This designation identifies lands of lesser natural importance or with lower farming and forestry potential. These lands protect the physical and visual continuity of the Greenbelt and allow the public to use and enjoy it. It conserves open, rural landscapes and provides recreation and visitor services for public use and enjoyment. Appropriate uses and facilities include rural recreation (for example, cross-country skiing, golf or horseback riding) and small rural commerce (such as farmers' markets, plant nurseries, hobby farming, bed-and-breakfasts, farm vacations), as well as hamlets, farming and grazing and institutional safety buffers.

More and more Greenbelt farmers supplement their income with roadside sales of fresh produce.

Greenbelt bed-and-breakfasts would be encouraged through the conversion of existing buildings.

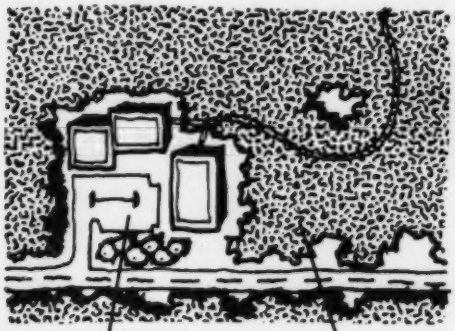
Compatible Built Facilities

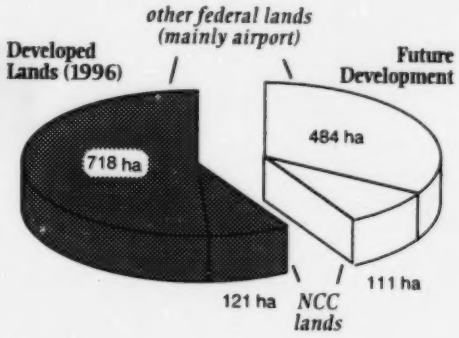
Goal

To accommodate built facilities that require a Greenbelt location and to do so in a way that is compatible with other Greenbelt functions.

Buildable Site Area

This designation identifies locations for uses that require an extensive open area, isolation or a rural environment close to the decision-making centres of the Capital. These uses also provide a source of revenue that helps to maintain the Greenbelt and implement the Master Plan. Appropriate uses include large institutions, businesses and compatible developments with special site requirements or Capital significance, or those that support an existing institutional use. Most of the land so designated will stay in a rural or natural state. Building design, layout and parking will complement the surrounding rural landscape.

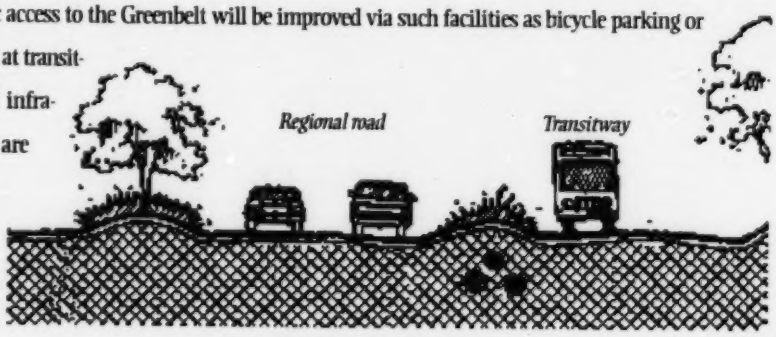




BUILDABLE SITE AREA

Infrastructure Corridor

This designation identifies lands that are used to move people, services and goods through the Greenbelt without fragmenting valuable cultivated or natural areas. Appropriate uses include roads, transitways and sewers, water mains and natural gas pipelines. Infrastructure such as hydro lines will be as unintrusive as possible, and public access to the Greenbelt will be improved via such facilities as bicycle parking or farm produce stands at transitway stations. Most infrastructure corridors are or will be owned by levels of government other than federal.



The Experiences Network

The Experiences Network elaborates the public activities and landscape character proposals of the Concept Plan. It encompasses only certain parts of the Greenbelt, notably areas of important public programming and powerful landscape character that strongly influence people's perceptions of the Greenbelt and its place in the Capital.*

These elements were defined based on extensive examination of the Greenbelt's visual character, existing and future recreational pathway connections, visitor attractions, and other areas with high visibility, accessibility and potential for communicating Capital messages.

The Greenbelt roles and five corresponding elements of the Experiences Network are:

GREENBELT ROLE	EXPERIENCES NETWORK ELEMENTS
Distinctive Capital Setting	• *Capital Arrival* • *Panorama* • *Greenbelt Edge*
Accessible Public Activities	• *Visitor Attraction* • *Visitor Route*

Experiences Network elements cover either a specific area (as in a Panorama), indicate a special site (such as a Visitor Attraction), or describe a corridor (such as a recreational pathway). Landscape character and the scale and nature of activities contained in the Experiences Network generally reflect the objectives and desired characteristics of the land designation in which they are located.

Visitors will be offered a wide range of rural experiences in the Greenbelt.

Distinctive Capital Setting

Distinctive Capital Settings are intended to conserve and enhance the visual character and distinctiveness of the Greenbelt, especially in areas of high visibility.

Capital Arrivals

Capital Arrivals include all intercity routes (e.g., provincial highways, the Rideau River) that visitors use to approach the Capital. Such routes should provide a symbolic and dramatic introduction to, and exit from, the Capital and the Greenbelt. High-quality landscaping, visitor services (for example, rest areas and signs)

* *See Experiences Network plan, opposite.*

PARC DE LA GATINEAU
GATINEAU PARK

GATINEAU

HULL

AYLMER

OTTAWA

ORLÉANS

KANATA

BELLS CORNERS

NEPEAN

GLOUCESTER

Queensway

blvd. Confederation Blvd

Montreal

St. Laurent

Heron

Walkley

Carling

Baseline

Merivale

Bank

Lemm

Anderson

Hawthorne

March

Terry Fox

Hazeldean

Eagleson

Richmond

Moodie

Fallowfield

Greenbank

Woodroffe

ferme Experimental Farm

148 5 17 417 31 416 16

0.8 km / 10 min.
3.3 km / 10 min.
6.5 km / 10 min.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 km

Legend

Distinctive Capital Setting

- Capital Arrival
- Panorama
- Greenbelt Edge/Urban

Accessible Public Activities

- Visitor Attraction
- Greenbelt Spine Trail and Spur
- Scenic Corridor

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The National Capital Greenbelt

1996

Experiences Network

The entrance to the Greenbelt should be a vivid experience.

can be important elements of Capital Arrivals. It is important to note that most Capital Arrivals fall under the jurisdiction of levels of government other than federal; the participation of these levels of government is key to the effectiveness of Capital Arrivals.

Panoramas

Panoramas help people to orient themselves within the Capital and the Greenbelt. They reveal and express the character of the Greenbelt. Land uses, site features and structures should not block or disturb background or long views.

Greenbelt Edges

Greenbelt edges are lands within the Greenbelt that border non-Greenbelt lands. The perceived Greenbelt edge should correspond to the actual Greenbelt boundary. Edges should contrast with abutting urban areas to highlight the Greenbelt's presence, but should complement rural or natural edges. It is best to have vegetated buffers, rural characteristics and non-intrusive lighting on roads abutting the Greenbelt, and a minimum of buildings on Greenbelt lands adjacent to the edge.

Over two-thirds of the Greenbelt edge will border an urban area once the Region's urban areas are built out.

Accessible Public Activities

Accessible Public Activities comprise a series of linked visitor attractions that provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy and benefit from the Greenbelt.

Visitor Attractions

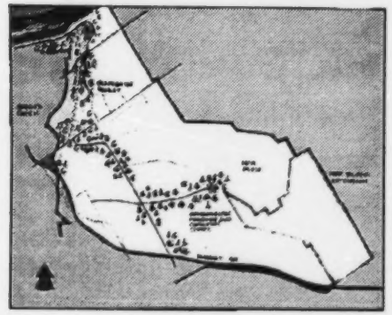
Visitor attractions have the potential to communicate messages of visitor interest concerning the Greenbelt, the region, the Capital or the nation and are found in settings with high visibility and accessibility. Examples are interpretation centres, campsites, bed-and-breakfasts and shops or restaurants in rural hamlets. Visitor attractions are key activity areas in the Greenbelt, focusing on subjects such as natural or cultural history. Where possible, such attractions should be well served by public transit and by Visitor Routes.

Visitor Routes

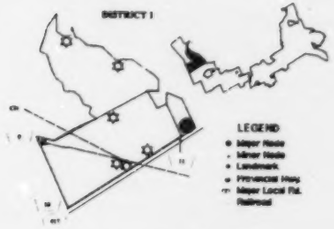
Visitor Routes provide scenic visitor access through a diverse range of Greenbelt landscapes to a variety of Visitor Attractions. These links consist primarily of recreational pathways and connect visitor attractions to each other within the Greenbelt (and with sites beyond it) via the Greenbelt Spine Trail. A series of existing roads will form a scenic circuit that enhances the visitor's journey to and between Visitor Attractions. Uses that promote Greenbelt programming objectives are encouraged along this scenic circuit, and the character of the Greenbelt is maintained through avenue plantings, fencing detail and other measures.

6. Implementing the Greenbelt Master Plan

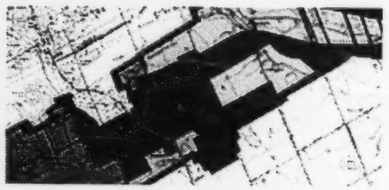
The Master Plan outlines implementation strategies and development guidelines for specific areas and sites within the Greenbelt. These strategies and guidelines aid those responsible for implementing the many recommendations contained in the Master Plan. They tailor the more general Land Designation and Experiences Network objectives to the needs of individual areas, such as Stony Swamp, and of sites such as the proposed "Environment House" along the Rideau River.



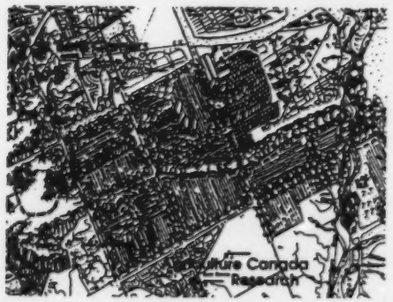
University of Waterloo



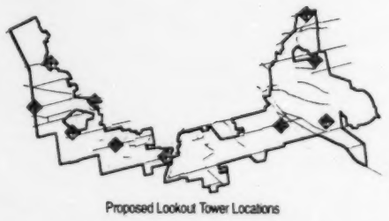
University of Manitoba



Carleton University



University of Guelph



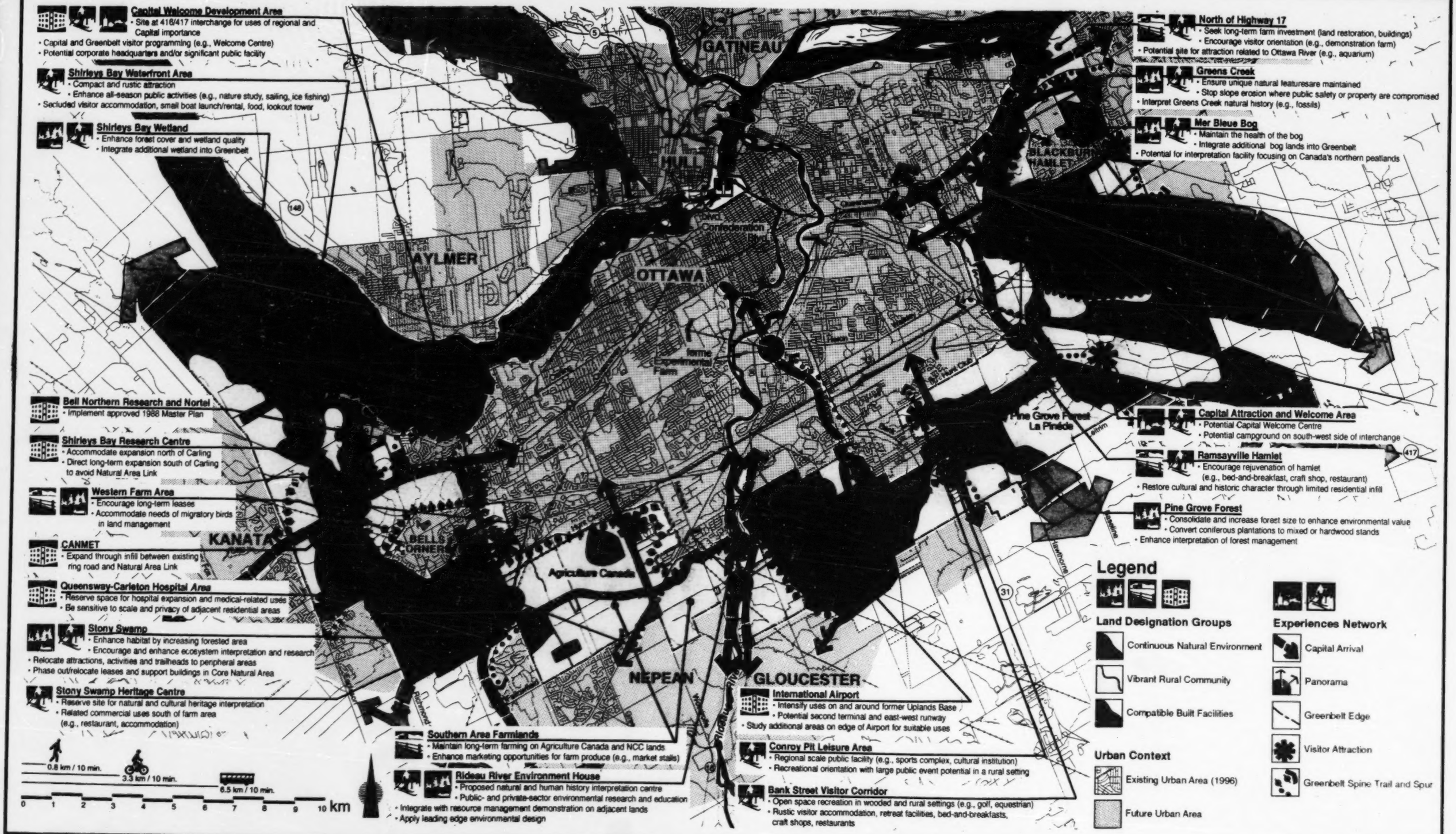
Technical University of Nova Scotia

Strategies and guidelines pertain to a number of activities, including:

- land uses in key areas;
- the management of important natural, farm and forest areas;
- the management of existing and future campus development in Buildable Site Areas; and
- the planning, design, and programming of Visitor Attractions which are distributed throughout the Greenbelt as part of the Experiences Network.

The NCC, other federal agencies, provincial and municipal governments, private and non-profit organizations and individuals can all play a role in helping to implement the Master Plan.

The accompanying map illustrates strategies and guidelines for key areas and sites in the Greenbelt.


Capital Welcome Development Area
• Site at 416/417 interchange for uses of regional and Capital importance
• Capital and Greenbelt visitor programming (e.g., Welcome Centre)
• Potential corporate headquarters and/or significant public facility
Shirleys Bay Waterfront Area
• Compact and rustic attraction
• Enhance all-season public activities (e.g., nature study, sailing, ice fishing)
• Secluded visitor accommodation, small boat launch/rental, food, lookout tower
Shirleys Bay Wetland
• Enhance forest cover and wetland quality
• Integrate additional wetland into Greenbelt
Bell Northern Research and Nortel
• Implement approved 1988 Master Plan
Shirleys Bay Research Centre
• Accommodate expansion north of Carling
• Direct long-term expansion south of Carling to avoid Natural Area Link
Western Farm Area
• Encourage long-term leases
• Accommodate needs of migratory birds in land management
CANMET
• Expand through infill between existing ring road and Natural Area Link
Queensway-Carleton Hospital Area
• Reserve space for hospital expansion and medical-related uses
• Be sensitive to scale and privacy of adjacent residential areas
Stony Swamp
• Enhance habitat by increasing forested area
• Encourage and enhance ecosystem interpretation and research
• Relocate attractions, activities and trailheads to peripheral areas
• Phase out/relocate leases and support buildings in Core Natural Area
Stony Swamp Heritage Centre
• Reserve site for natural and cultural heritage interpretation
• Related commercial uses south of farm area (e.g., restaurant, accommodation)
0.8 km / 10 min.
3.3 km / 10 min.
6.5 km / 10 min.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 km
Southern Area Farmlands
• Maintain long-term farming on Agriculture Canada and NCC lands
• Enhance marketing opportunities for farm produce (e.g., market stalls)
Rideau River Environment House
• Proposed natural and human history interpretation centre
• Public- and private-sector environmental research and education
• Integrate with resource management demonstration on adjacent lands
• Apply leading edge environmental design
North of Highway 17
• Seek long-term farm investment (land restoration, buildings)
• Encourage visitor orientation (e.g., demonstration farm)
• Potential site for attraction related to Ottawa River (e.g., aquarium)
Greens Creek
• Ensure unique natural featuresare maintained
• Stop slope erosion where public safety or property are compromised
• Interpret Greens Creek natural history (e.g., fossils)
Mer Bleue Bog
• Maintain the health of the bog
• Integrate additional bog lands into Greenbelt
• Potential for interpretation facility focusing on Canada's northern peatlands
Capital Attraction and Welcome Area
• Potential Capital Welcome Centre
• Potential campground on south-west side of interchange
Ramsayville Hamlet
• Encourage rejuvenation of hamlet (e.g., bed-and-breakfast, craft shop, restaurant)
• Restore cultural and historic character through limited residential infill
Pine Grove Forest
• Consolidate and increase forest size to enhance environmental value
• Convert coniferous plantations to mixed or hardwood stands
• Enhance interpretation of forest management
International Airport
• Intensify uses on and around former Uplands Base
• Potential second terminal and east-west runway
• Study additional areas on edge of Airport for suitable uses
Conroy Pit Leisure Area
• Regional scale public facility (e.g., sports complex, cultural institution)
• Recreational orientation with large public event potential in a rural setting
Bank Street Visitor Corridor
• Open space recreation in wooded and rural settings (e.g., golf, equestrian)
• Rustic visitor accommodation, retreat facilities, bed-and-breakfasts, craft shops, restaurants
Legend
Land Designation Groups
Continuous Natural Environment
Vibrant Rural Community
Compatible Built Facilities
Urban Context
Existing Urban Area (1996)
Future Urban Area
Experiences Network
Capital Arrival
Panorama
Greenbelt Edge
Visitor Attraction
Greenbelt Spine Trail and Spur
GATINEAU
HULL
AYLMER
OTTAWA
KANATA
BELLS CORNERS
NEPEAN
GLOUCESTER
BLACKBURN HAMLET
Pine Grove Forest
La Pinède
Agriculture Canada
Farm
Experimental
Confederation Blvd
Richmond
Hunt Club
Walkley
Riverside
Aviation
Hawthorne
Bessborough
Elmvale
Prince of Wales
Carling
Fisher
Island Park
5
148
16
31
417

National Capital Commission / Commission de la Capitale

Canada

The National Capital Greenbelt

1996

Implementation

7. A New Approach for the 21st Century

The Greenbelt Master Plan represents a significant benchmark in the history of this unique and significant Capital open space. The plan provides a renewed vision and purpose for the Greenbelt as a publicly owned rural landscape in the heart of Canada's Capital. It outlines the necessary tools and actions to ensure its effective implementation.

Over the coming decades, the Greenbelt will continue to be shaped as a distinctive and cohesive rural setting for Canada's green Capital. It will remain a large, rural open space running in a continuous belt in roughly the present shape and location. Its diverse mix of uses and landscapes will be maintained; areas with ecological significance and high renewable resource capability will remain protected, as will specific areas suitable for developments of Capital significance that benefit from and respect the Greenbelt's rural setting.

The Greenbelt will remain in the public domain, planned and managed for the broad public good; federal ownership will remain the primary mechanism for achieving Greenbelt objectives. Efforts will be made to enhance the relevance of the Greenbelt to the Capital and to Canadians through public programs and facilities, and by promoting the Greenbelt as a laboratory for research into managing the environment, the urban/rural interface and other related topics that might emerge over the life of the Master Plan.

The Greenbelt will continue to generate revenue; the NCC will use this revenue to help offset the operating costs of the Greenbelt and to invest in opportunities identified in the Master Plan. Partnerships with other levels of government, the private sector and the public will form an important part of the strategy to move the Greenbelt towards the future envisaged in this Master Plan.

A haven for nature, wildlife and humanity, a living repository of Canadian history, traditions, technology and ecology — this national treasure will truly represent rural Canada. This Master Plan needs the commitment of our leaders and citizens, so that the Greenbelt can continue to grace the Capital for the benefit of present and future generations.